



Safety Alert 05-12

Multiple Serious Heat Injuries

25 July 2005

Last week, five Fort Leonard Wood Soldiers suffered serious heat injuries. This is five too many. Although the recent heat wave was a significant factor, rather than providing an “excuse,” it simply causes our responsibilities to be that much greater. We cannot allow ourselves to suffer any more such injuries! Heat injuries can cripple or kill by “cooking” our internal organs. Leaders, especially those conducting outdoor training, should step back, take a good look at what they are doing, adjust as necessary, and proceed with great caution throughout the rest of the summer. Below are some basic questions all leaders should ask themselves and their subordinate leaders, especially those who are conducting training activities.

IDENTIFY HAZARDS

ASSESS HAZARDS

- ◆ Are you closely monitoring the Wet Bulb temperature? You must monitor the WBGT hourly in the area of the training (not at one or two central areas). Ensure that the kit is properly calibrated and that personnel know how to use it.
- ◆ Do you know your Soldiers? Which Soldiers have suffered previous heat injuries? Ensure that they are conspicuously identified. They are much more likely to suffer subsequent heat injuries. Do you know the acclimatization level of each Soldier and what activities that Soldier has been involved in during the past few days? Remember that heat injuries are cumulative.
- ◆ Do you have Ice Sheets available at training sites, and are they used properly? Ensure that you have at least 8 per company, as recommended by TRADOC.
- ◆ Are you diligently enforcing adherence to the Work-Rest and Water Consumption guidelines and ensuring that Soldiers receive adequate nutrition?
- ◆ Are you adjusting workload, training location, breaks, uniform, and equipment IAW the Heat Category?
- ◆ Are you spot-checking Soldiers to ensure that the buddy system is in place, that they are drinking adequate amounts of water, they are eating adequately, and that their thought processes are lucid? Ask them questions (What day is it? Who is your drill sergeant? Where are you?)
- ◆ Are you updating your risk assessment daily? It is a good idea to annotate on it the time at which the Heat Category reaches 5.
- ◆ Do you have a good plan in place for reaction to heat injuries? When in doubt, evacuate any Soldier requiring rapid cooling?

Basic Principles of Risk Management:

Never risk Soldiers' lives needlessly.

Accept no unnecessary risks.

Accept the risk only if the benefits outweigh the potential

IMPLEMENT CONTROLS

MANSCEN SAFETY OFFICE

DEVELOP CONTROLS AND MAKE RISK DECISION

SUPERVISE AND EVALUATE